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TAGS: SNAR SENV KCRM PTER CO
SUBJECT: NAS Monthly Report for September 2009

SUMMARY

I1. (SBU) SUMMARY: During September, aerial and manual eradicators experienced an uptick in attacks on eradication efforts. The complaints committee's resources are strained as a deluge of new claims of alleged spray damage to legal crops in the CSDI-priority zone of Narino continues. The aerial eradication program is on track to reach the 2009 spray goal, however, insufficient funding will further impede manual eradication program's ability to reach its calendar year eradication goal. Medical evacuation flights are increasingly becoming a major part of the Plan Helicopter Program's mission. On September 27-30, NAS hosted the ONDCP Director Gil Kerlikowske, who met with GOC representatives including President Uribe, observed a DARE event at a vulnerable school, and visited Tumaco, Narino to learn about Embassy Bogota's Colombia Strategic Development Initiative (CSDI). NAS Director met with the Commander of the Colombian Army who expressed his appreciation for U.S. assistance, promised strong support for NAS programs, and was receptive to the possibility of developing a joint intelligence task force in Tumaco. END SUMMARY.

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- II. Manual Eradication Program Update
- III. Plan Colombia Helicopter Program (PCHP) Update
- IV. Colombia National Police Air Service Support (ARAVI)
 - Program Update
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- VI. Base security/Road Interdiction/NVD Program Update
- VII. Maritime Interdiction Program Update
- VIII. Communications/Weapons Program Update
- IX. Port Security Program (PSP) Update

IX. Colombian Army Counter-Drug (CD) Brigade Program

Update

XI. Reestablish Police Presence Program (Carabineros)

Update

XII. Air Bridge Denial (ABD) Program Update

XIII. Environmental Program Update

XIV. Individual Demobilization Program Update

II. AERIAL ERADICATION PROGRAM

12. (SBU) Aircraft based in Forward Operating Locations (FOLs) in Larandia, Villagarzon, Tumaco, and Caucasia sprayed a total of 9,462 hectares in September. A total of 1,416 ha were sprayed out of Tumaco; 5,962 ha out of Larandia and Villagarzon; and 2,084 out of Caucasia. The aerial eradication team has sprayed 82,546 ha through nine months, toward its 100,000 ha calendar-year goal. September saw a marked increase in attacks on aerial eradication assets: eradication aircraft experienced 11 hostile-fire incidents and 28 impacts in September, bringing the total for the calendar year to 29 hostile fire incidents and 53 impacts; no one has been wounded or killed as a result of these incidents.

II. MANUAL ERADICATION PROGRAM

13. (SBU) Phase III of the GOC's 2009 manual eradication campaign (GME program) will end in early October. Total eradication of coca for September was 7,295 hectares - bringing the GME program's year-to-date total to 37,947 hectares. Including eradication carried out by the Colombian security forces, total coca eradication through September was 43,491 hectares, well short of the 70,000 manual eradication goal for the year. GME's Phase IV begins in mid-October and will run through December 15. The GOC's 2009 poppy eradication goal is 500 hectares. The police are fielding a 40-man unit to provide security for 15 civilian eradicators to attack poppy cultivation in Cauca beginning in mid-October.

14. (SBU) Reduced funding for Phase IV will result in fewer GMES than expected in the field. Police plans to increase the pace of eradication of coca by adding police units to provide security were cancelled due to insufficient funds to contract civilian eradicators. Given the resources allocated for manual eradication through the end of the year, it is unlikely that manual eradication of coca will reach the annual goal of 70,000 ha.

15. (SBU) In September, landmine and hostile fire incidents killed five civilian eradicators and one security personnel. In one incident, three eradicators were killed and six soldiers injured by a command detonated explosive device in Norte de Santander. On September 29, a 20-year old carabinero was killed and two others injured by a landmine during manual eradication operations near Tumaco. During this year's manual eradication operations, 38 people (25 security personnel and 13 civilians, including one UN Topographer) have died. In all of 2008, 26 security personnel and civilian eradicators were killed in manual eradication operations.

16. (SBU) Separate from the GME program, the Colombian Army (COLAR) and the Colombian National Police (CNP) conduct manual eradication

as part of their normal operations. Through September, COLAR had eradicated 4,173 ha of coca, 44 ha of poppy and two ha of marijuana, and the CNP had eradicated 1,207 ha of coca, nine ha of poppy and 47 ha of marijuana.

III. PLAN COLOMBIA HELICOPTER PROGRAM (PCHP)

¶ 17. (SBU) PCHP aircraft operated from Tumaco, Larandia, and Tolemaida bases and flew a total of 864 hours providing air assaults, air movements, reconnaissance, medical evacuations, and support missions for the CD Brigade and other vetted COLAR units. Helicopter hours have been depleted by damage to the aircraft and the increasing need to provide additional protection from ground fire incidents. Tumaco-based PCHP helicopters provided support for BACNA 2 (Counternarcotics Battalion of the CD Brigade) air assault missions and armed escort for COLAR MI-17 helicopters supporting manual eradication operations. PCHP helicopters supported the

ONDCP visit to Tumaco by providing air transportation and escort assistance. PCHP flew 24 hours supporting six medical evacuation flights that transported nine patients.

IV. COLOMBIA NATIONAL POLICE (CNP)

AIR SERVICE (ARAVI) SUPPORT

¶ 18. (SBU) ARAVI's NAS-supported fleet flew 2,225 mission hours in September. The seven UH-60 Black Hawks closed out the month with 176 flight hours and an Operational Readiness (OR) rate of 76 percent. One UH-60 is undergoing depot maintenance for structural repairs. The Bell 212 fleet flew 335 mission hours with an OR rate of 63 percent. One Bell 212 still needs to be inducted into the Service Life Extension Program/Rewire. The Huey II OR rate was 65 percent while flying 1,143 hours. Two Huey II aircraft, or six percent of the fleet, are currently undergoing depot maintenance for structural repairs. The DC-3 fleet flew 274 hours in September, with an OR rate of 52 percent; one DC-3 is undergoing a 2,000-hour inspection. The last C-26 Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance Aerial Platform (ISRAP) PNC 0224 arrived on October 3.

¶ IV. INTERDICTION

¶ 19. (SBU) During September, the CNP's Antinarcotics Directorate (DIRAN) seized ten metric tons of cocaine hydrochloride (HCl) and cocaine base, 38 metric tons of coca leaf, 7.7 metric tons of marijuana, and 40 kgs of heroin. The CNP also destroyed 21 cocaine HCl laboratories and 83 coca base laboratories, and captured 386 metric tons of precursor chemicals. Since January 1, 2009, the CNP has seized a total of 102.4 metric tons of cocaine/cocaine base, 395.4 metric tons of coca leaf, 128.7 metric tons of marijuana, and 524 kgs of heroin. The CNP has also destroyed 151 cocaine HCl laboratories, 1,193 coca base laboratories, and seized 22,480 metric tons of precursor chemicals.

¶10. (SBU) On September 13, the Tuluá Junglas destroyed a cocaine HCl laboratory on the Pacific Coast in southern Choc??? Department that contained 160 kgs of cocaine. From September 10-14, 70 Bogota Junglas uncovered two FARC 47th Front arms/explosives caches near Puerto Triunfo, Antioquia that contained 590 antipersonnel mines, 29 claymore mines, 70 kgs of explosive mixture, 200 kgs of ammonium nitrate, 180 fuse igniters, detonators, detonation cord, and a time fuse. Reports indicate that the mines were going to be used to attack manual eradication teams. Following this operation, the Bogota Junglas deployed to Cucuta on September 15-17 and destroyed three cocaine HCl laboratories containing 1.5 metric tons of cocaine and two metric tons of precursor chemicals. On September 14, the DIRAN Zone One Intelligence Group captured 60 metric tons of precursor chemicals stored in a warehouse in Pacho, Cundinamarca. The DIRAN Zone 6 (Necocli, Antioquia) Operational Company destroyed a cocaine HCl laboratory in the municipality of Necocli on September 16. On September 22, the DIRAN Ipiales (Narino) Company, working based on an informant's tip, set up a road checkpoint and captured a woman carrying 100,000 euros (approximately \$146,820) taped to her body. On August 27, the same Company had captured an Ipiales taxi driver transporting 740,000 euros (\$1.086 million).

¶11. (SBU) A 30-man Santa Marta Jungla contingent continued supporting the Search Block force in Monteria, Cordoba that has been looking for the remnants of a major narcotrafficking group. DIRAN deployed a 65-man element to Tumaco (45 Junglas, 12 DIRAN Intel, and 8 ARAVI crew members) to conduct long-term counternarcotics operations in Southeast Narino Department.

¶12. (SBU) The \$670,000 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers project at the Facatativa Ammunition Storage Facility will be completed on November 5 and will provide support for the Facatativa Jungla Company, the DIRAN, and the CNP's Carabinero School.

¶13. (SBU) On September 2, The DIRAN Junglas deployed a nine-man Mobile Training Team (MTT) to Mexico to provide 60 days of antinarcotics training to 60 members of the Jalisco State Police. On September 14-28, the DIRAN Junglas conducted a two-week Program of Instruction (POI) for 17 Colombian Air Force (COLAF) special operations personnel focusing on survival, land navigation, and operations planning. The DIRAN's four-man MTT will travel to the Bolivian Garras School, Chimore on October 17 to provide instruction on cocaine laboratory destruction, chemical safety, and evidence handling; Argentinean, Paraguayan, and Brazilian nationals will also attend this training. The Jungla Commando International Course, made up of 54 international and 29 CNP students, will continue until December 3. The Combat Medic Course's 39 students will graduate on December 15. Six new U.S. Army Special Forces trainers arrived in Colombia on September 24 and will assist with training at Pijao through April. The DEA is helping the Facatativa Junglas to develop a live fire reaction pistol and rifle range. The Junglas set up a cocaine HCl laboratory and Jungle patrol demonstrations in Tumaco for the ONDCP visit.

VI. BASE SECURITY/ROAD INTERDICTION

/NVD PROGRAM

¶14. (SBU) On September 2, 44 officers from the DIRAN, Carabineros, Navy, Marine Corps, and the CD Brigade graduated from the Defensa De Areas (Base Security) course in Tumaco. The next course will take place in Necocli in October and will be comprised of 40 officers from the DIRAN Northwest Zone base, DIRAN officers from other departments, and COLAR personnel currently assigned to the

Uraba Gulf area; the course will end on November 4.

¶15. (SBU) The Tierradentro, Antioquia IDIQ project begun in late May was completed in September. Phase II of the Miraflores, Guaviare IDIQ project should be finished by late October or early November. All 165 of the new NVDs (Night Vision Devices) were inspected and sent to designated EMCAR units located throughout the country.

VII. MARITIME INTERDICTION

¶16. (SBU) On September 14, the Colombian Coast Guard in Buenaventura located a large cache in a mangrove containing 502 kgs of marijuana. On September 17 in Choco, the Coast Guard captured a "go-fast" boat with 300 kgs of cocaine. On September 23, the Buenaventura Coast Guard seized another "go-fast" after a struggle during which the narcotraffickers threw a significant amount of cocaine overboard; the Coast Guard was able to capture the vessel and arrest two men, recovering 112 kgs of cocaine.

¶17. (SBU) The GRUIN (Naval Intelligence tactical team) conducted live fire exercises and zeroed the unit's new, NAS-procured, Advanced Combat Optical Gun (ACOG) sites and Eotech holographic weapon sites. GRUIN tactical units established an observation post in the Cesar department and found a cache belonging to the BACRIM (emerging criminal band) group "Los Rastrojos" that contained 683 kgs of cocaine, six AK-47 assault rifles, one mini-Uzi, four hand grenades, and one pistol.

VIII. COMMUNICATIONS/WEAPONS

¶18. (SBU) The DIRAN weapons section repaired three M60 machine guns, four M9 Beretta pistols, forty M16, thirteen M249 automatic weapons, and five metal detectors. The weapons section also provided various tactical materials to DIRAN/DICAR police forces assigned to manual eradication operations. A Mobile Training Team (MTT) traveled to Santander, Narino, and Caqueta to train local police forces. NAS installed a security camera system at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-built armory in Facatativa, allowing for 24-hour monitoring of the armory via closed intranet systems around the country.

IX. PORT SECURITY PROGRAM (PSP)

¶19. (SBU) With NAS support, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE) and the CNP seized a record-breaking amount of \$40 million in cash in Buenaventura's port. This seizure is the largest of its kind in Colombian maritime history.

¶20. (SBU) DIRAN's Ports and Airports Area (ARPAE) units seized 407

kgs of cocaine, one kg of heroin, and 80,000 pills of pseudoephedrine (going to Mexico) at Bogota's El Dorado Airport and arrested 25 people. At the Pereira airport, 15 kgs of cocaine and 3.8 kgs of heroin were seized. In Cali's airport, 90 kgs of cocaine were seized and 13 people arrested. 2.7 kgs of heroin were seized at the Buenaventura's port; 190 kgs at the Cartagena's port; and 14.6 kgs of cocaine at the Santa Marta's port.

I21. (SBU) NAS Bogota supported the participation of two DIRAN polygraph examiners in the Latin American Polygraph Congress in Lima, Peru. The DIRAN unit conducted polygraph exams on 117 members of the ARPAE and Internal Affairs sections; 87 of those tested passed the exam, 25 failed, and five had inconclusive results.

IX. COLOMBIAN ARMY COUNTERDRUG (CD) BRIGADE

I22. (SBU) The CD Brigade's First, Second, and Third Battalions supported eradication and conducted interdiction and combat operations from bases in Tumaco and Larandia. The battalions conducted interdiction and combat operations against the FARC's Daniel Aldana Mobil Column, 29 Front, and the ELN's Guerrero Del Sindagua Company in Narino and Caqueta. The CD Brigade secured a total of 14,533 ha for aerial eradication and destroyed seven coca paste laboratories, five enemy camps, and one enemy cache, seizing one kg of coca paste, 1,180 gallons of liquid precursors, 3,115 kgs of solid precursors, 200 kgs of processed coca leaf, and 3,153,832 coca seedlings. During combat operations, the battalion confiscated one rifle, 231 rounds of ammunition, and one hand grenade. The Third Battalion killed one FARC terrorist during operations.

XI. REESTABLISH POLICE PRESENCE PROGRAM (CARABINEROS)

I23. (SBU) EMCAR 43 (mobile carabинero squadron) eradicated a total of 57.5 hectares of illegal crops in Caqueta in September and seized a total of 90 weapons and ten hand grenades, capturing 36 persons implicated in drug trafficking, terrorism, and homicide. The first students selected through the police scholarship program, including ten indigenous police recruits, will soon go through evaluations in Tulua, Valle.

XII. AIR BRIDGE DENIAL (ABD)

I24. (SBU) Out of 1,320 air tracks over Colombia, three were declared Unknown, Assumed Suspect (UAS) in September. Colombia responded to two of the UAS; the third aircraft departed Colombian airspace before it could be inspected. Colombian and Panamanian authorities shared information that led to the seizure in Panama of an aircraft that was carrying drugs from Colombia; the Panamanian authorities arrested the pilot and impounded the aircraft.

XIII. ENVIRONMENTAL

¶25. (SBU) In September, the DIRAN closed 1,624 cases, bringing the back-log total to 2,284 cases. During the month, the interagency complaints committee received 465 new claims of alleged spray damage to legal crops; 358 of these cases originated from Barbacoas, Narino. The antinarcotics police continue to work on

decreasing the back-log generated from Narino over the past two months however, incomplete applications have impeded an expeditious resolution of the complaints. Out of the 2,778 complaints received from Narino in July and August, 1,587 have been closed. It is likely that an additional 900 will be closed by November.

¶26. (U) The NAS-contracted personnel began building a laboratory at the National Institute of Health where the scientists will be able to verify the presence of glyphosate in human bodily fluid samples. By mid-October, when this laboratory will be completed, Colombia will have achieved full capacity to analyze glyphosate in soil, water, and body fluid samples.

¶27. (U) The environmental section continues to promote environmental conservation messages by explaining the negative effects of illicit crop production on the environment. During September, the picture museum was displayed at the Unicentro shopping center, and it will travel to the Gran Estacion and Portal La 80 malls in October. Additionally, several pictures from the picture museum will be placed in Bogota's libraries.

XIV. INDIVIDUAL DEMOBILIZATION PROGRAM

¶28. (SBU) The Ministry of Defense (MOD) Humanitarian Program for Demobilized Individuals (PAHD) has received 20,042 former combatants since 2002, including 203 insurgents in September and 2,125 thus far in 2009. Demobilization rates are approximately 20 percent below those in 2008, and a tenth lower than those in 2007. Eighty percent of the demobilized in 2009 are former FARC members and the rest are ELN. Desire for a new start and way of life, abuse by former comrades, political divergence, and military pressure are the major motivations for desertion. Information voluntarily provided by demobilized is one of the best sources of intelligence available to security forces. Reintegration remains a major challenge for the Colombian government as almost 80 percent of demobilized individuals have not completed elementary school. The MOD continues to strengthen initiatives for prevention of illegal recruitment and psychological assistance to the demobilized.

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